

Capital Planning Committee

Meeting Minutes

November 20, 2014

In attendance were:

Steve Andrew
Andrew Flanagan
Charles Foskett
Mike Morse
Brian Rehrig
Diane Johnson
Ruth Lewis*
Anthony Lionetta
Barbara Thornton

Also in attendance: Eve Margolis

* Denotes those not in attendance

- **Meeting Opened:** Updated plan materials were distributed to the CPC. The memorandum of the November 6 meeting was reviewed and approved with correction of the word “rigors” to “rigorous” under “Review of Capital Balances”. There are no new Department Requests. Andrew Flanagan provided an inventory list of buildings owned by the Town including square footages, jurisdiction and oversight responsibility, as requested at the last meeting.
- **Projects/Other Items:** Andrew Flanagan reported that the Community Safety Building Phase 2 is finally coming to an end and, the Central Fire Station Rehab project is going well. Also, he will be reviewing capital balances and report on his findings at a future meeting along with recommended course of action on the issue of handling residual balances of completed projects.
- **Updated Cost Estimate Policy:** Brian Rehrig reported on the updated version of the draft CPC policy on Cost Estimates, memorandum dated 11/20/2014. The primary change from the prior version is the additional provision that building projects in excess of \$500k need to be reviewed by the PTBC. The CPC was in agreement with this memorandum with the exception that a statement be added requesting a response from the PTBC on its position after its review. It was suggested that this draft policy be sent to the PTBC for its review and comment. The final version will be added to the CPC guidance that is sent to Department Heads next year as part of the Item Request package.
- **Community Safety Building Rehab, Phase 3:** Brian Rehrig reported on new information from the PTBC on an updated cost estimate for the next phase of the CS Building Rehab Program. It appears that the \$6.6 million planned cost is now \$8million. Brian reported that the PTBC is reviewing estimated costs and scope to see what can be eliminated. Ninety percent plans are expected to be submitted the first of the year.

- **Possible State Budget Cuts:** Andrew Flanagan reported on possible/pending state cuts to municipal aid. The cut that would impact Arlington the most would be the reduction in transportation funds for vocational schools (about \$40k). Other than this, Arlington should be able to weather the cuts if they happen.
- **Health and Human Services Requests:** Barbara Thornton resumed the Subcommittee's report on H/H requests. (memo provided). Key concerns center on the building related requests. The Subcommittee recommends that, for the most part, action on these be postponed until the Town can provide technical assistance and input. The feeling is that we should not be remodeling spaces without knowing what the space is going to be used for and whether there are other better alternatives.

Tony Lionetta noted that the H/H requests are not following the spirit of the Capital Planning process with so many new requests showing up in FY 2016. (H/H requests for FY16 totaled about \$200k last year, now they are over \$900k) Also, there is a question on how the Kitchen remodel request for \$150k got into the plan

The only requests to be considered for approval are: Waterproof WRH Basement, and Upgrade Front Lobby at Maple Street Senior Center. Also, the purpose of the Space Needs Assessment needs to be better understood.

- **Rink Requests:** Steve Andrew reported of Subcommittee's review of Rink Requests for FY2016 of which there are two: Electrical Upgrade and Reno/Upgrade of Lockers. The Electrical Upgrade is recommended. It is also recommended that the Locker Room upgrade be postponed and reconsidered next year. The rink is already charging market rates (near upper limit) for ice. Rink revenue needs to be able to pay for 50% of this cost. Joe Connelly is going to survey the primary user groups to see if they would be willing to pay a higher rate, if the locker facilities were upgraded. (the primary user groups are Arlington High, Arlington Catholic and Youth Hockey) If they are not willing, the project will be dropped, until maybe the market allows for a higher rate.
- **DPW Requests:** Mike Morse reported on the Subcommittee's review of DPW requests (memo provided) Key notations are as follows:
 - 2007 Request (\$20k) for **Cemetery Expansion** can be swept.
 - Proposed improvements to the **Bleachers at Spy Pond Field** and the **Chapel Building** (\$250k reduced to \$175k) are being questioned (similar to the WR Cottage and Carriage House projects). Do we need to do them and why? The bleachers are not heavily used and could likely be replaced with smaller less costly facility. There are no plans to reuse the chapel so why make substantial investments. Both these issues are referred to the Town Manager / Board of Selectmen for policy decisions.
 - **Mass Avenue Streetscape** (\$100k) request is new for FY2016. The general feeling is that the \$100k requested is excessive. The current recommendation is for \$25k in FY 2017, but even that is subject to consultation with Planning on prior efforts to get this section of Mass Avenue into the MassDOT program.
- **Overall Budgeting:** Charlie Foskett presented his memo, dated November 17, 2014 presenting a Strategy for the Future. The overall concept would be to combine three approaches to fund the Stratton School and "close" a projected \$4 million overage in the

five year capital plan. They are: 1) to move projects which are eligible for funding under the new Community Preservation Act (CPA) law to CPA. (The CPA is projected to garner \$1,200,000 in new taxes plus a match from the State per year. Current thoughts are for a 30% match, 2) Sell off two town owned properties (DVA plus possibly the Gibbs) and; 3) Act on the residual \$4 million in the school debt exclusion vote.

Further discussion is needed amongst the Capital Planning Committee, as well as with the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen.

- **Next meeting:** December 4, 2014. Also an additional meeting is scheduled for **December 11**.

Adjournment